

Utilization of Emergency Contraceptive Pills as a Backup for Lactational Amenorrhea Method of postpartum contraception and Nursing Implication

Abstract

Background: Lactational amenorrhea is a normal postpartum physiological phenomenon. It offers specific biologic advantages for both the mother and the baby. Nature appears to protect the mother from an immediate second pregnancy through the natural contraception method. **Aim:** Assess the utilization of emergency contraceptive pills as a backup for lactational amenorrhea methods of postpartum contraception among women and evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program on nurses' knowledge toward the utilization of emergency contraceptive pills as a backup for lactational amenorrhea methods of postpartum contraception. **Subjects & methods: designs:** a cross-sectional descriptive survey for women and a quasi-experimental intervention for nurses. Two main convenient samples were recruited in the study: women's attending family planning clinics, or pediatric clinics for immunization of children (260), and family planning nurses (20). **Tools** used for data collection were a structured interview questionnaire for the women's and a self-administrated questionnaire for the nurses'. **Results:** A great majority of women don't know the criteria for lactational amenorrhea and start sexual intercourse more than 40 days after labor. More than one-quarter of women had unintended pregnancies. The great majority of women weren't aware of the emergency contraceptive pills. Statistically significant improvement was revealed at both the post- and follow-up phases. Despite some decline, the level at the follow-up phase was still statistically significantly higher than the pre- program levels. **Conclusion:** Women did not depend on emergency contraceptive methods as an effective method and did not use emergency contraceptive methods after labor. Implementation of the educational program was associated with statistically significant improvements in nurses' knowledge regarding ECPs. **Recommendation:** Maternity nurses should increase women's awareness and knowledge about the criteria of the lactational amenorrhea method and the importance of using emergency contraceptive pills to support the lactational amenorrhea method in cases of unprotected intercourse until a more effective contraceptive method is used.

Key word: Lactation amenorrhea, Emergency contraception, unplanned pregnancy, Nursing Implication